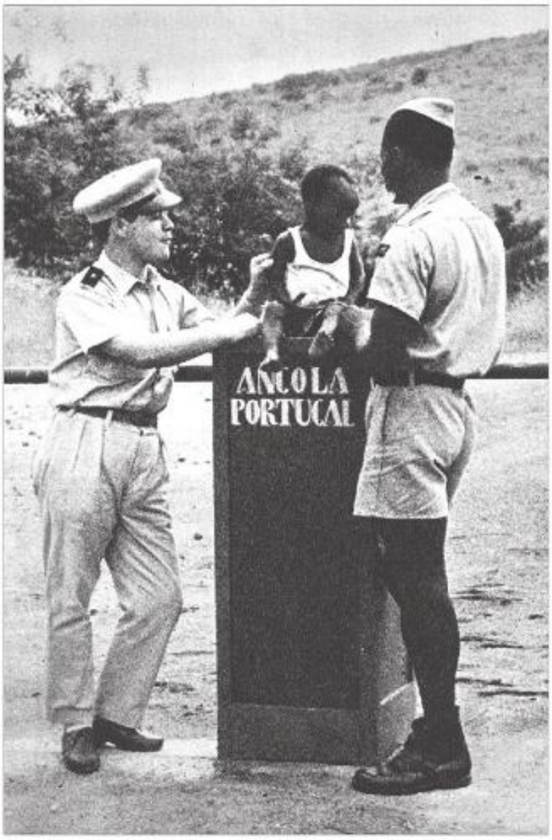
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https://books.google.it/books?id=JeXZAwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=The+Flechas:+Insurgent+Hunting+in+Eastern+Angola,+1965-1974&hl=it&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiszP7E79bfAhVM1VkKHdhTB8UQ6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=VACCHI&f=false



Northern border post between the Congo and Angola.
Photo Cesare Dante Vacchi



Holden Roberto

and easy access to the developing political activities of the Belgian Congo. Roberto thus professed to feel a close kinship with the they were never able to resolve their differences and indeed were unyielding competitors for the future spoils of Angola.

Pagina 7 di John P. Cann, *The Flechas: Insurgent Hunting in Eastern Angola, 1965-1974*, Helion & Company, [S. l], 2013.

to the fore during the employment in early 1962 of an infantry battalion to the vicinity of Nóqui, a frontier port on the Congo River. Accompanying the battalion was an Italian journalist, Cesare Dante Vacchi, who held a wealth of combat experience from both Indochina and Algeria and wrote for *Paris Match*. He befriended the officers and men of the battalion, and, as he learned their language, began to offer instruction based not only in the technical tradecraft of soldering but also, and more importantly, in the psychological preparation that enabled the troops to acclimate quickly to the confusion of combat. As the strong results of Vacchi's coaching became widely apparent, it was felt that this more sophisticated and advanced preparation should be the basis of a specialized body of highly capable troops. Consequently, in late 1962, after extensive briefings of key generals, Colonel José Bettencourt Rodrigues, the Chief of Staff of the Military Region, was given a free hand in establishing the new units and their training centre at Zemba, a site about 80 miles northeast of Luanda. In 1963, the first of these new troops, called commandos, were deployed in small numbers and organized in platoon-sized commando groups (*grupos de comandos*). In September 1964, the 1st Company of Commandos began operations from Belo Horizonte, the new commando base located in the north of Angola. These commandos also proudly wore the new, distinctive crimson beret.

Overseeing all this was Lieutenant-Colonel Gilberto Manuel Santos e Castro, under whose tutelage commando instructors took great pains to stay abreast of the latest enemy operational methods and to maintain the 'warrior edge' in their training. This edge, in essence, was an approach to fighting that continually pushed the commandos to think of themselves as the hunter rather than the hunted. Officers returning from contact with the enemy were rigorously debriefed, and commando instructors regularly participated in operations to learn of the latest enemy developments. This information was integrated with intelligence from other sources gathered by the military and national intelligence services, and from such training was constantly revised



Gilberto Santos e Castro
Photo Personal archive of Coronel Raúl Folques

conflict. The *canhangulos*, primitive firearms made with water pipes stolen from farms, were exchanged for automatic rifles. The frontal attacks were replaced with the refinement of ambushes, each more carefully planned. Mines began to appear on the main unpaved roads and their dirt trail access routes.

In early January 1962, two scholars of Portuguese Africa, George Houser and John Marcum, were hosted by the UPA/FNLA on a tour of the north. During their two-week stay, they walked more than 200 miles over an "interwoven network of trails leading through forests and elephant grass, across vine and single-log bridges, and around open-pit animal traps to the hidden semiportable villages that constituted nationalist Angola".[5] Marcum's description of UPA/FNLA organization reflects a hierarchical one in which orders, arms, ammunition, medicines and other supplies were delivered from the Congo

Pagina 18 di John P. Cann *The Flechas: Insurgent Hunting in Eastern Angola, 1965-1974*, Helion & Company, [S. l], 2013.

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Da pp 17-18 di di John P. Cann *The Flechas: Insurgent Hunting in Eastern Angola, 1965-1974*, Helion & Company, [S. l], 2013 (dal capitolo II del suddetto saggio intitolato "Learning counterinsurgency"):«As the war progressed, particurarly the reoccupation of the north, the urgent need for specially trained troops became clear, that is those troops

whose training went well beyond the traditional instruction and even beyond that of the CCEs. Such troops would be formed into units capable of operating independently for extended periods in the field. This need came to the fore during the employment in early 1962 of an infantry battalion to the vicinity of Nóqui, a frontier port of the Congo River. Accompanying the battalion was an Italian journalist, Cesare Dante Vacchi, who held a wealth of combat experience from both Indocina and Algeria and wrote for *Paris Match*. He befriended the officers and men of the battalion, and, as he learned their language, began to offer instruction based not only in the technical tradecraft of soldiering but also, and more importantly, in the psychological preparation that enabled the troops to acclimate quickly to the confusion of combat. As the strong results of Vacchi's coaching became widely apparent, it was felt that this more sophisticated and advanced preparation should be the basis of a specialized body of highly capable troops. Consequently, in late 1962, after extensive briefings of key generals, Colonel José Bettencourt Rodrigues, the Chief of Staff of the Military Region, was given a free hand in establishing the new units and their training centre at Zemba, a site about 80 miles northeast of Luanda. In 1963, the first of these new troops, called commandos, were deployed in small numbers and organized in platoon-sized commando groups (*grupos de commandos*). In September 1964, the 1st Company of Commandos began operations from Belo Horizonte, the new commando base located in the North of Angola. These commandos also proudly wore the new, distinctive crimson beret.».